

NIFC News

National Interagency Fire Center
3833 S. Development Ave.
Boise, ID 83705



Date: August 13, 2006
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Rose Davis, 208-387-5437
or Patti Bielling 210-269-7538

NIFC REQUESTS MILITARY BATTALION FOR FIREFIGHTING

Boise, Idaho... The National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) has requested one Army battalion to assist in fire suppression on the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest in Washington. Task Force Blaze, a 500-soldier unit from Fort Lewis, Washington, begins training August 13 and will be mobilized to the Tripod Complex fire on August 14, 2006. Field training will take place on August 15th with the soldiers starting active fire suppression work in 20-person crews on Thursday, August 17th.

The lightning-caused Tripod Complex is located approximately seven miles northeast of Winthrop Washington. It is composed of the Tripod and Spur fires and has burned over 83,000 acres. The fire is burning in heavily forested areas with a large amount of downed fuels. It continues to threaten residences and structures.

“We appreciate the military’s approval of this request considering their other current taskings,” said Karyn Wood, Fire Operations Director for the U.S.D.A. Forest Service at NIFC. “Adding 25 fresh crews to the mix of resources will really help us make progress on the Tripod Complex.” There are currently 38 large fires burning across the United States including most western states, Michigan and Florida.

In July, NIFC activated Air National Guard units with the Modular Airborne Firefighting System (MAFFS) to serve as airtankers. The four units have flown 179 missions out of the Klamath Falls Airtanker Base in Oregon and the Boise Airtanker Base in Idaho.

The military aircraft and the Army battalion are activated as requested by NIFC through a signed agreement with the Department of Defense and coordinated by the U.S. Northern Command.

###